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15 December 1956

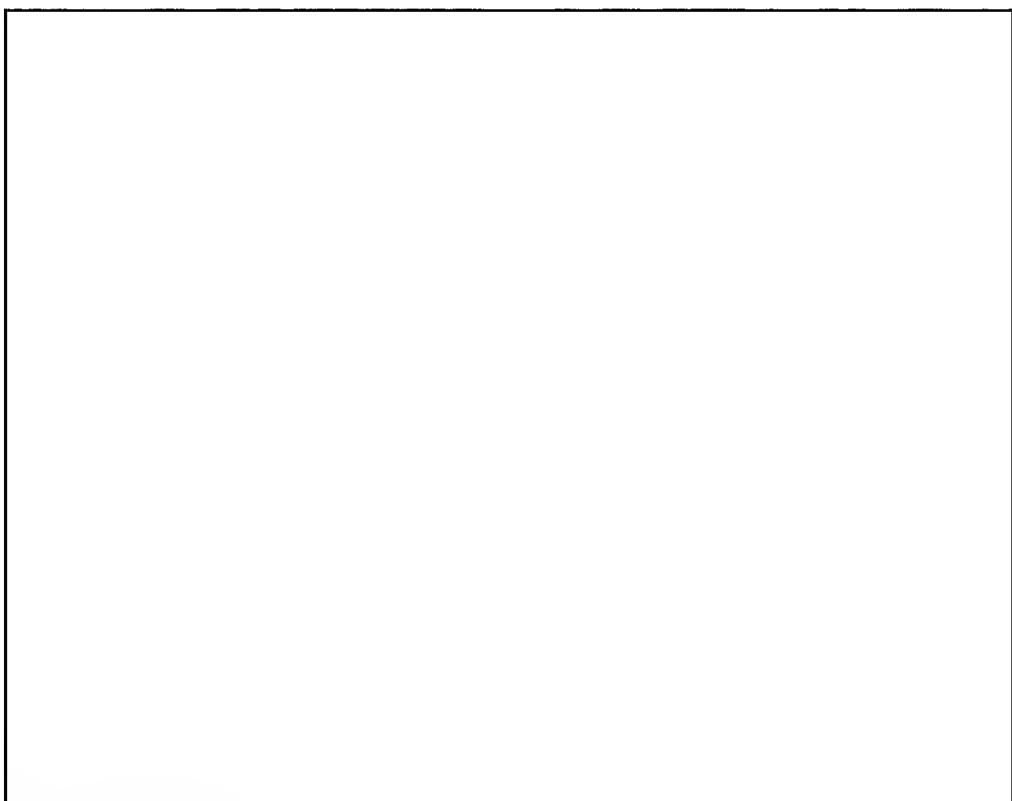


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STATE, NAVY review(s) completed.

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1. BRITISH MAY HALT SUEZ TROOP WITHDRAWAL OVER SALVAGE ISSUE

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A British Admiralty officer has said that Britain may halt withdrawal of its forces from Port Said as a result of the UN's refusal to accept Britain's terms for the use of its 40 salvage vessels and personnel. The officer remarked that Secretary General Hammarskjold apparently is siding with Nasr 100 percent.

The Admiralty is reportedly "stunned and bitterly disappointed," and believes that Lt. Gen. Wheeler's instructions for the use of only six of the British salvage vessels without British crews were in fact drafted before his departure from New York, and were never subject to negotiation. Government leader Butler stated in London on 12 December that "there can be no question of our ships being used without their crews!"

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Comment Refusal by Britain to withdraw its remaining troops from the Suez Canal zone would prevent the start of UN operations to clear the canal and give Egypt an opportunity to raise new equivocations on the issue and step up harassment of the British in Port Said.

Completion of the withdrawal of British and French forces is believed planned for 18 December. So far, an estimated 6,300 troops have departed for Cyprus and the United Kingdom, leaving approximately 7,000 in Egypt.

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3. ISHIBASHI TO BECOME JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER

Comment on:

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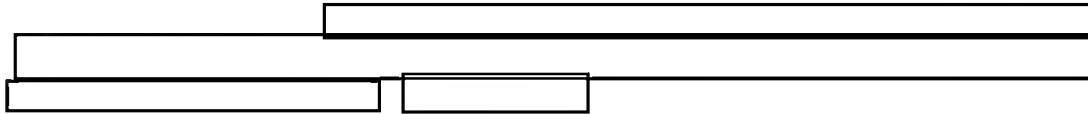


The election of Tanzan Ishibashi as president of Japan's ruling Liberal-Democratic Party virtually assures his early approval by the Diet as prime minister. His narrow 258-251 victory over party secretary general Nobusuke Kishi suggests, however, that his government will be weakened by continued conservative factionalism.

Ishibashi stated on 30 November that Japan's major foreign policy question for 1957 would be normalization of relations with Peiping. He acknowledged that formal diplomatic relations might not be possible at this time but believes increased trade is the means by which this will ultimately be brought about and therefore favors a reduction of the China embargo.

Ishibashi has a realistic appreciation of the value to Japan of continued co-operation with the United States, but has called for more "equality" in US-Japan relationships and favors a revision of the US-Japan Security Treaty. He supports defensive rearmament for Japan.

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6. EGYPT AND SYRIAN LEFTISTS STEP UP PRESSURE FOR
NEW SYRIAN CABINET

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Comment on:

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Syrian leftists, working closely with the Egyptian embassy in Damascus, are stepping up pressure for a cabinet change in Syria. The new device is a parliamentary "pledge" now being circulated for signature among the 142 deputies. The pledge calls for a "sound and harmonious" regime to defend Syria's independence, increase its military strength, repress "imperialist plots," and resist the "divisive" Baghdad pact. It is sponsored by leader of the Arab Socialist Resurrection Party Akram Hawrani, former prime minister Khalid al-Azm, a left-wing Nationalist Party politician, and other pro-Egyptian politicians. Syrian army strong man Colonel Sarraj presumably is among the supporters of this move. Some 50 to 60 deputies have reportedly signed. When the signatures of a majority of the deputies have been obtained, President Quwatli presumably will be presented with a "popular" demand for a new government. A pro-Western cabinet minister on 12 December predicted an early demise of the present Asali cabinet, saying that it is irreconcilably divided on several issues.

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Egyptian officials in Damascus have informed the American embassy that the pledge is aimed at a "homogeneous attitude in the Syrian government," particularly as regards policy toward Iraq. They have admitted that it is designed to force the resignation of three pro-Iraqi ministers--two representatives of the Populist Party and one of the Nationalist Party. A Populist attempt to obtain Egyptian approval for an alternate proposal was rejected.

A new cabinet might retain Asali as prime minister and include Khalid al-Azm as foreign minister and Hawrani as minister of defense. The other proposed ministers are leftist and pro-Egyptian despite their party labels.

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